

# Opening Doors

by Teale Greylord

I was raised on a small farm in rural Wisconsin and attended a local public school as a child. In that environment I felt unchallenged and uninspired. After High School I chose not to attend a university, but rather to join the work force and discover who I was as a person. By working with the Hispanic community, I learned both the fundamentals of the language and the struggle of people within this country who are unable to speak for themselves. I quickly began gaining life experience and soon discovered a way to fulfill my passion for helping people. I decided to attend UW-Fond du Lac in pursuit of a Spanish degree so that I may someday become a translator and help the people who helped change my life. After an amazing and engaging experience at UW-Fond du Lac, I was fortunate enough to continue my pursuit of a bachelor's degree at UW-Oshkosh. Before even attending the campus I had many wonderful opportunities and experiences that showcased the diverse aspects of the campus. Exciting opportunities like the Women's Leadership Conference of '08, S.A.F.E. Training, and the birth of the new LGBTQ Resource Center were all reasons I wanted to join the UW-Oshkosh Campus Community.

I soon discovered all the wonderful aspects that make UW-Oshkosh such a unique campus. Wonderful resources like the Multicultural Education Center, Women's Center, LGBTQ Resource Center, and SLIC provided new and engaging areas of student, faculty, and staff involvement. As I learned from past experience, these resources are the birth place of new meaning and increased awareness about diversity and equality issues. Only by understanding other cultures, practices, and beliefs are people able to better understand themselves and their place in society. Education has had a pivotal role in the changes our country has seen within the last 100 years, from women's suffrage to the equal rights movement. My education is important to me because it allows me to, in some small way, create positive change in my community and in individuals' lives. It is my dream that within my lifetime people of all walks of life will experience true equality. As a result of the work that I will soon be doing, I will help remove barriers and limitations from people within our society to help them advance in their search for the American dream. That is why it is so important for places such as this to

exist, fueled by the passion of students and educators for a better future.

The most important thing I learned as a part of the UW-System is that students have the power to create meaningful change on our communities, in our campuses, and in the lives of those around us. The most effective way to create long lasting institutional change is by combining resources and working together. When all students and student focused groups unite, the entire campus is strengthened and the student voice rings louder than ever. Yet the power of students extends far beyond the physical limitations of the campus itself. Student involvement in the community strengthens both the campus and the community, while enriching the experiences of students as a whole. An effective example of student strength and involvement in the community that I am engaged in is Celebrate CommUnity, a new annual diversity celebration in Fond du Lac that showcases all the different cultures within our local community. By uniting different campuses, schools, libraries, churches, restaurants, resource centers, and local businesses we have been able to leave a lasting fingerprint on our community.

As a student, my personal goal is personal enrichment and growth so that someday I may join my local community as a well rounded and open minded individual. All the goals of a liberal education are embodied within this concept of individual enrichment, because it is our individual strengths and differences that creates a stronger community. By combining our diverse talents as a campus, community, and country we become stronger as a whole. Yet without communication between languages and peoples, the dream of a stronger world is merely a dream. By opening means of communication, people are introduced to new ideas, activities, and the appreciation of diverse beliefs. The programs offered at UW-Oshkosh allow me to gain the knowledge and tools required for increased communication, and also creates a safe and structured center for discussion, analytical thought, and creative problem solving.

Unfortunately, not everyone has access to the luxuries of a college education. Without the assistance of financial aid, I would be unable to attend college, get the degree I seek, and fulfill my

passion for helping others. It is only through scholarships such as this one, that I am able to achieve my dream of helping people and becoming a part of the movement towards a better world. The idea of my life without the possibility or means of a college education is my inspiration for overcoming obstacles and striving to achieve success. I have worked diligently to retain a 3.75 G.P.A. while staying active in numerous student organizations. It has been my great pleasure to be a part of several student organizations focused on multiculturalism, diversity, and equality. I have received high honors in English, Student Governance, and Multiculturalism; but the greatest honor I have had thus far is giving back to my community through community service and involvement.

Through the kindness of strangers I have been given the gift of an education. It is my hope that someday I will manage to repay the debt that has been placed upon my shoulders by giving back to my community in a deep and lasting way. It is my dream to be a part of an organization that helps people seeking education as a way to thank UW-Oshkosh for changing my life. I know this will be an achievable goal because of the valuable resources and experiences I have had as a student at UW-Oshkosh. A liberal arts education is a vital asset and a life altering experience that will empower me in the pursuit of my dream. I hope that our shared vision for the future puts us on the same path. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.